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PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

[ISSUED JANUARY 18TH, 1868.]

SESSION 1867-68.

First Meeting, 11th Nov., 1867.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, BART., K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in
the Chair.

ELECTIONS.—*His Imperial Highness Ismail Pacha, Viceroy of Egypt*, was elected an Honorary Member of the Society. *Rev. Andrew A.W. Drew, M.A.* ; *W. Herbert Evans, Esq.* ; *Sir Henry Bartle E. Frere, K.C.B.*, and *Rev. John Graves*, were elected Fellows.

ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY SINCE THE LAST MEETING, JUNE 22ND.—
'*Jobi Ludolfi Historia Ethiopia succincta descriptio regni Habessinorum quod vulgo malé Presbyteri Johannis vocatur.*' Frankfurt, 1861, folio. Purchased. '*Ad hac editionem Commentarius,*' 1691. Purchased. '*A New History of Ethiopia,*' in four books, by Job Ludolfus, 1864. Purchased. '*Wanderings among the Falashas in Abyssinia, with Description of the Country and its various Inhabitants,*' maps and plates ; by Henry A. Stern, 1862. 8vo. Purchased. '*Routes in Abyssinia,*' with two Appendices. Topographical Department of the War Office, 1867. Presented. '*The British Captives in Abyssinia,*' by Charles Beke, 1867. Purchased. '*Voyage en Abyssinie dans le Province de Tigré, du Samen, et de l'Amara,*' by MM. Ferret and Galinier. 3 vols., with maps and plates, complete, 1839-47. Purchased. '*Captives in Abyssinia*':—Parliamentary Reports, 1866. Purchased. '*Voyage en Abyssinie, exécuté pendant les années 1839-45, par une commission scientifique composée de MM. Lefebvre, Petit, Dillon et Vignaud,*' completé. Purchased. '*A Journey through Abyssinia.*' Henry Dufton, 1867. Purchased. '*The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia, and the Sword*

Hunters of the Hamram Arabs,' by Sir Samuel Baker. Presented by the Author. 'Medical Report on the Kingdom of Shoa.' 'Reise nach Abessinien, den Gala-Ländern Ost Sudan und Chartum, in der Jahren 1861-1862,' Th. von Heuglin. Illustrations and map. Presented by the Author. 'Die Sprache der Bari in Central-Afrika.' J. C. Mitterutzner. Purchased. 'De un viaggio sul fiume Biancanell' Africa Centrale.' Don G. Beltrame, 1864. Presented by the Italian Geographical Society. 'Die Mande-Neger-Sprachen.' Dr. H. Steinthal, Berlin, 1867. Purchased. 'Der Nil: seine Quellen,' von Dr. T. Kotschy. Presented by the Author. 'Sheep and Stock Farming, South African and Transvaal Republic,' &c. Mr. Blake. 'Atlas du Voyage au Congo et dans l'Afrique Equinoxiale,' par J. B. Donville. Presented by W. D. Cooley, Esq. 'Sud-Afrika und Madagascar:' Justus Perthes' Mittheilungen. Gotha, 1867. Petermann. 'Tamatave to the Capital (Madagascar).' T. Wilkinson. Presented by the Author. 'Neueste Deutsche Forschungen in Sud-Afrika,' von Karl Mauch, H. Hahn, und R. Brenner, mit Karte, 1867. Presented by Dr. Petermann. 'The Company and the Crown, 1867. Hon. J. H. Thurlow. Presented by the Author. 'The Bombay Builder.' J. Tennent, Esq. 'A Journey by Captain Ross along the Mekran Coast between Cape Jask and Gwadar,' 1867; map. Presented by the Commissioner of Sindh. 'Lusiad of Camoens, Dissertation on the Discovery of India.' Presented by S. M. Drach. 'Hugonis Grotii, Batavicæ,' 1632. Purchased. 'P. Gyllii, de Constantinopleos Topografia,' 1632. 'L'Ambassade de la Compagnie Orientale des Provinces Unies vers le Grand Cham de Tartarie.' Leyden, 1665. Presented by Sir W. Parish. 'On Tea Cultivation in Eastern Bengal,' 1867. W. N. Lees. Presented. 'Bibliographia Palestinæ,' Titus Jobler. Leipsic, 1867. Purchased. 'Notes of a Journey through Egypt and Palestine by Mediterranean and Italy, by a Lady.' Presented by S. M. Drach, Esq. 'Reise in Siam in 1863.' 3rd vol. Dr. Adolf Bastian. Presented by the Author. 'British Guiana,' Paris Exhibition Catalogue. Presented by W. Walker, Esq. 'Barrow's Collection of Voyages,' 1745. Presented by S. M. Drach, Esq. 'Geographia Generalis.' B. Varenius, 1671. 'System of Universal Geography,' 1864. F. Muir. Presented by the President. 'Kurzer Abrige der Geographie Halle,' 1794. Presented by S. M. Drach, Esq. 'On Education of Youth in History and Geography.' J. Clarke, 1736. Presented by S. M. Drach, Esq. 'Compendium Geographicum,' by Golnitz, 1634. Purchased. 'Venezuela; or, the History, Climate, Soil, &c., New Granada, Ecuador,' 1867. 'Report on Interoceanic Canals and Railways between Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.' Maps. Presented by

Admiral Davis, United States. 'Exploracion Oficial, desde el norte de la America del sur, Orinoco, Cassiquiare, Rio Negro, Guyana,' &c. Maps. F. Michelena y Rojas, 1867. Presented by the Author. Charles Sumner, 'On the Cession of Russian America to the United States,' 1867. Presented by J. E. Nourse, United States. 'List of reported Dangers in the Pacific Ocean not recorded in Maps in general use,' 1866. The United States' Navy Hydrographical Department. 'The Republic of Mexico Restored,' M. G. Garzia, Mexico, 1866. Presented by the Author. 'United States' Naval Astronomical Expedition,' vols. 3 and 6, by J. M. Gillis, 1856. Presented by Sir W. Parish. 'On Crania, West Pacific.' J. B. Davis. Presented by Dr. Lamprey. 'L'Exposition Ethnographique, Paris, 1867.' 'Results of Meteorological Observations for 25 years at Hobart Town,' by F. Abbot. 'Suecia.' 'Hispania.' 'Portugallia.' 3 vols., Elzevir editions, 1631. Purchased. 'Residence in Normandy.' Constable's Miscellany, 1831. Presented by S. M. Drach, Esq. 'Adventures in North of Europe,' by Edward W. Lander, 1836. Presented by S. M. Drach, Esq. 'L'île de Crète,' par V. Raulin, Paris, 1867. Purchased. 'Bosnien,' by G. Theommel, Wien, 1867. Purchased. 'Les Travaux d'Amélioration aux Embouchures du Danube,' Galatz, 1867: 'Embouchure de Soulina,' 1867, Leipsic. Presented by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. 'Tea-trade of Russia.' Mr. Lumley, 1867. Presented by the Foreign Office. 'Russia, Moscovia itemque Tartaria,' 1630. 'Den Danske Gradmaalning,' 1867. C. G. Andrée. The Publisher, 'Veröfentlichen Resultate der Recrutirung Geschafte.' Th. Bischoff. 'Navigation Française et la Révolution Maritime du 14 au 15 Siècle, etc., 1867,' par P. Margry. Purchased. 'Army of Great Britain, 1867.' Presented by Sir H. James. 'Frobisher's Three Voyages.' Hakluyt Society. 'Grönland und die Grönlander.' Dr. Helmes. 'Distribution of Temperature in Lower Regions of Earth's Atmosphere.' H. Hennesy, F.R.S. Presented by the President. 'Siluria; a History of the Oldest Rocks in the British Isles,' &c., by Sir Roderick I. Murchison. Presented by the Author. 'Darmstadt Geologische Specialkarte des Grossherzogthums Hessen.' Maps, plates. 5 vols. 'Notes et Documents sur les Tremblements de Terre, et les Phénomènes Volcaniques des Îles d'Aleutiennes et de la côte Nord Amérique.' 3 vols. Paris. Presented by the Author. 'Coup d'œil général sur le Topographie et la Géologie du Mexique et l'Amérique Centrale,' par M. d'Aoust. Presented by the Author. 'Nivellement de Précision de la Suisse.' A. Hirsch and E. Plan-tamour, Genève, 1867. Presented by the Foreign Office. Dr. S. G. Blanc's 'Wissenswürdigkeiten aus der Natur und Geschichte der

Erde,' etc. Presented by Dr. H. Lange. 'Killebuttcl und das Seebad zu Kuxhaven.' Hamburg, 1818. 'Remarks on Korea,' 1865. Allen Young. Presented by the Author.

ACCESSIONS TO THE MAP-ROOM SINCE THE LAST MEETING, JUNE 22ND.—The principal maps are marked thus* :—Tracing of the rivers Endeavour and Annan, in Queensland, Australia. Presented by Sir G. Bowen. Native Map of Japan, divided into provinces, and coloured. Road-map from Pekin to Kiachta. Presented by E. C. Bowra, Esq., Customs, at Canton. *Map of the Colorado Territory, United States. Presented by J. Barwise, Esq. *Map of the Argentine Republic, &c. *Map of the Province of Buenos Ayres, 6 sheets. Both presented by Mr. Burgis. Map of Central America. Presented by E. G. Ravenstein. *Map of the World, and one of Asia Minor, in Turkish characters; constructed and photographed by his Excellency Ahmed Vefyk Effendy. *Map of the International Atlantic and Pacific Junction Railway, Nicaragua, as projected by Capt. Bedford Pim, R.N., 1866. Map of Northern Africa, shewing the routes of Gerhard Rohlfs, in 1861 to 1867. Presented by A. Peterman. *Topographical Plan of the Province of Madrid, on 22 sheets, with index and triangulation. Presented by Don Juan de Vila Nova, Professor of Geography, Madrid. *Map of Nubia and Abyssinia, by A. K. Johnston, F.R.G.S. *Photographic copy of the general Map of the United States' Boundary Survey, on 2 sheets, by D. Williams. Presented by Archibald Campbell, U. S. Commissioner. *Danish Chart of the Kattegat, 1867. *Map of Abyssinia. Presented by J. Wyld, Esq. (2 copies). Map of Abyssinia, shewing the Nile tributaries, by Sir S. Baker. Map of Abyssinia, by Dr. Beke. Both presented by E. Stanford, Esq. *Map of Abyssinia, by the Topographical Dépôt of the War Office. Presented by Sir. H. James, Director. *Map of the Isthmus of Suez, by M. Voisin, Director. Purchased. Map of Nova Zembla. Map of United States of America. Both by A. Petermann. *Map of British Columbia, prepared under the directions of Capt. Parsons, R.E. Presented by the Author. Also a section of the above, and tables of Meteorological Observations. *Admiralty Charts, 36 sheets. *Ordnance Maps, 496 sheets, up to date of publication.

The PRESIDENT opened the Session with the following Address :—
GENTLEMEN,—IN opening this Session, the first subject to which I have to allude is the progress of the Searching Boat-expedition which Her Majesty's Government, at the representation of our Council, has sent out in order to obtain authentic tidings of Dr.

Livingstone. As I announced to you in my Anniversary Address, the Boat-party, under the leadership of Mr. Young, and provided by the Admiralty with every requisite, set sail from Plymouth on the 11th of June. At the Cape of Good Hope, Mr. Young received great assistance from the Authorities, obtaining a whale-boat for the carriage of his stores, and the addition of two native Africans to his party; one of whom could speak the Zulu language, and would be most useful as an interpreter when the expedition arrived at the head of Lake Nyassa. Two letters will be read to you, giving details of the progress of the party up to their arrival within the mouth of the Zambesi. Meantime it is satisfactory to learn that they made a very quick voyage from the Cape to the Kongoni entrance of the Zambesi, accomplishing the distance in $9\frac{1}{2}$ days; and, after obtaining a negro crew, departed on the 27th of July upstream on their venturous errand.

I have so often explained to you the cause of my scepticism on the painful subject of the reported death of Livingstone, produced chiefly by my estimate of the mendacious character of the only man who says he witnessed the catastrophe, and also from that person having given two accounts of it—the one entirely contradicting the other, that I am sure you feel with me, it was due to the reputation of our body that we should not attach credence to such a story, and that we should wait until some valid proof of the death of my illustrious friend had been obtained. I therefore repeat what I said when the expedition left our shores, that we must abide patiently till the second—perhaps the third—month of the coming year, when Mr. Young's party, having returned from the upper end of Lake Nyassa, shall have set our painful suspense at rest. If we should then happily learn that Livingstone was not killed at the spot mentioned, but had passed on into the interior, why then, if accompanied by a few black men only (which was the case when he carried out successfully all his earliest great discoveries), I have such faith in his unyielding energy and never-failing resources—that, though he may have had no means of communicating with the coast, he may, after an interval of a year or more, reappear and rejoice us with an account of his northward exploration along, and perhaps far beyond, the Lake Tanganyika.

In regard to the geography of Abyssinia, to the consideration of which public attention is re-awakened, there will be read to you this evening a condensed sketch of the expeditions to that country, in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, by our great precursors in bold adventure—the Portuguese, as prepared by our

Secretary, Mr. Clements Markham. On this subject, permit me to remind you that twenty-four years have elapsed since—when occupying this Chair—I brought before the Society as much knowledge respecting Abyssinia as it was in my power to collect; basing it, naturally, on the then recent researches of our associate Dr. Beke, which justly gained for him a wide reputation and our Gold Medal.

After mentioning the names and exploits of forty-two travellers who had been in Abyssinia in the forty years preceding the year 1844, I stated that of all those who, since the days of Bruce, had visited that country, Dr. Beke was then the individual who had most improved our geographical acquaintance with it. Since that time it has been the good fortune of our Society to boast of another most successful explorer of Abyssinia in the person of our associate Mr. Mansfield Parkyns; and, after the very trying difficulties which he surmounted, and the remarkable events he witnessed, no one can any longer see reason to doubt the truthfulness of any of the descriptions by Bruce. In fact, all foreign travellers who have visited Abyssinia, whether the brothers D'Abbadie, or their successors, MM. Ferret et Galinier, MM. Combes et Tamissier, or M. Th. von Heuglin, who has just issued the narrative of his journeys in 1861 and 1862, confirm the earliest impressions we received from our countryman Bruce respecting this extraordinary region.

During the vacation which has passed, I invited the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the desirability of sending out some men of science with the military forces about to proceed to Abyssinia, in order to procure more accurate knowledge respecting the geography, geology, and natural history of the interior of that country than we now possess; and I ventured to hope that, although in the great expedition to Turkey and the Crimea, a similar suggestion, which was then made, met with no attention, it would not be overlooked on this occasion. I am happy to say that the suggestion was approved of by Lord Stanley and Sir Stafford Northcote, the Ministers under whom the expedition originated. Whilst it has been thought best by Her Majesty's Government to take the greater number of such men of science from Bombay, the Secretary for India has been pleased to approve my special recommendation that our Secretary, Mr. Clements Markham, should proceed from hence to act as the Geographer of the Expedition. Although we shall have to regret the absence of Mr. Markham during this session, I am confident that you will agree with me that he could not possibly be better employed in advancing our science than by taking part in this interesting mission; and, judging from his antecedents in South America and British India, we may confidently reckon upon him as

a correspondent who will give us a masterly geographical sketch and a vivid description of the region he may traverse.

I may also mention that Mr. W. Blanford, the Deputy Superintendent of the Geological Survey of India, who has been named to accompany the expedition from Bombay, is as sound and clear-sighted a practical geologist as could have been found at home; for he was educated in the Royal School of Mines, and has since produced excellent memoirs on parts of the Himalaya Mountains and Western and Central India.

Lieutenant St. John, one of our Fellows, who has already given us good information respecting Persia, has laid before us a memoir, which will be read at an early meeting, on the elevation of the country between Teheran and Bushire. This able officer, who has been employed in establishing the new line of electric telegraph in Persia, is, I am happy to hear, to be one of those who will accompany the Abyssinian expedition.

It is also gratifying to reflect upon the fact that, on this occasion, the Government has made every endeavour to bring together all procurable data respecting the various practicable routes across the country—a task which has been most efficiently completed by Lieutenant-Colonel Cooke, R.E., of the Topographical Department, under the direction of Sir H. James; each route of the numerous travellers being laid down in the first instance on Keith Johnston's new map. This has been followed by the completion of a new map of a large tract of Abyssinia, the result of an assiduous sifting and comparison of all previous documents, combined with hitherto unpublished materials. In the mean time, and in expectation of valuable additions which will be made, the public has now the advantage of consulting the general maps of Abyssinia, issued by our associates Mr. Keith Johnston and Mr. Wyld; and also two detailed maps, just received from our assiduous foreign contributor, M. Petermann, one of which exhibits, on a large scale, the features of the country between Massowah and Halai, in which the first operations of the British army will take place.

At the last meeting of the British Association, held at Dundee, the reputation of the Geographical and Ethnological Section was well sustained by the eloquent address of the President, Sir Samuel Baker. The very attractive volume which he has since published, entitled 'The Nile Tributaries of Abyssinia,' will, I venture to anticipate, have a reception from the public which will go far to rival that of his previous great work, narrating the discovery of Lake Albert Nyanza; for many readers will prefer his lively description

of the picturesque and bold Arab hunters, and the diversities of the wild animals of their country, to the journal of any wanderings among the inferior negro races on either side of the equator. The important observations of Sir Samuel, which shew that the true agricultural wealth of Lower Egypt is due to the fertile mud brought down by the Atbara and the Blue Nile with its affluents, as contrasted with the effects of the grander drainage-system of the White Nile, accords exactly with that which the geographer and geologist might expect who compares the physical outline and structure of the two regions in question. All the equatorial countries through which the White Nile flows, as well as those in which its great internal feeders or water-basins lie, are made up of hard, crystalline, and sandstone rocks, with scarcely the trace of lime, and few or no volcanic rocks; Abyssinia, on the contrary, and particularly all its western portions from which the Atbara and the Blue Nile flow, is made up of rocks containing a great variety of mineral substances, to a great extent of volcanic origin, which decompose into rich and valuable mould.

Then, again, we know that these mud-bearing affluents of the Nile descend in comparatively short courses and with great rapidity from the mountains of Abyssinia, which are very much loftier than the very distant plateau-lands in which the great and distant feeders of the White Nile lie; and in these data we see abundant reasons, whether geographical or geological, to sustain the view adopted by Sir Samuel Baker.

Among the papers which have been received at our office, and will be read to you at the earlier Meetings of the Session, I may observe that some of the most important, in a geographical point of view, relate to different portions of the Isthmus of Central America, and to surveys which have had for their object the discovery of lines of traverse, whether for railways or ship-canal, between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. One of these papers is by Mr. Collinson, a young engineer employed in the exploration of a line of route across the wildest parts of Nicaragua, in which he was engaged under the direction of Captain Bedford Pim, R.N., and which may be expected to throw much light on the physical geography of that region. On this subject, but more particularly relating to the winds and currents of the sea-coasts of Nicaragua, an interesting paper was read by Captain Maury before the Geographical Section of the British Association at Dundee; and I may venture to hope that this distinguished hydrographer will communicate to us a memoir on the same subject in the course of the Session.

Another memoir by M. de Puydt on that portion of the Isthmus of Darien which lies about 60 miles to the southward of the tract reported upon, some sixteen years ago, by Mr. Gisborne, will doubtless excite much interest, particularly as the author shows that the dividing ridge between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans there attains a maximum of only 120 feet above the sea-level.

We also hope to be soon favoured by Mr. Whympster with an account of the excursion which he has made to Greenland, and from whence he has just returned, having arrived at Copenhagen in a Danish vessel on the 22nd of last month. His projected sledge-journey into the interior of that glacier-covered land has been rendered less extensive than he had hoped, by obstacles which it was impossible to foresee; the chief of which was an epidemic, which has carried off from 8 to 10 per cent. of the population. The secondary objects of the expedition, however, as will be related to you, have been effectively carried out, and large collections have been made of the fossil and recent plants of the country, the marine animals of its shores, and stone and flint implements of its former inhabitants. It gives me much pleasure to announce that the British Association for the Advancement of Science have voted the sum of 100*l.* to Mr. Whympster to support his bold adventure, undertaken originally entirely at his own cost, and in the hope of throwing fresh light upon our knowledge of the present vegetation and animal life in the interior of that snow-clad region, as well as of explaining its former much warmer climate, whence plants, now fossil, which grew in these Arctic latitudes, must have derived for their existence a much greater amount of heat.

Lastly, gentlemen, let me congratulate you on opening this Session with an unusually long list of new candidates for enrolment as Fellows, among whom are many persons of note at home, headed by the noble Duke who now presides over the British Association, and of men highly distinguished in our Colonies led on by Sir Bartle Frere.

It is by such accessions, derived from all classes of our countrymen, that the truly British and cosmopolitan character of our Society is maintained.

The following letters were read, relating to the progress of the Livingstone Search Expedition :—

“DEAR SIR,

“H.M.S. *Petrel*,
“Off the River Kongoni, July 26, 1867.

“I have the honour to report that we sailed from the Cape, in this ship, on the 16th inst., and have had the good fortune to make a very quick passage

(9½ days). I have received every assistance from the senior officer at the Cape, and also from Commander Gordon of this ship. I obtained one whale-boat complete from the dockyard at Simon's Bay; but during the voyage, having had reason to fear a want of carriage for all our stores, Commander Gordon, on my application, has had a second whale-boat prepared to go with me if I required it; and a few additional items of stores and provisions have been supplied me. I have also volunteered two Kroomen and an English stoker from this ship, feeling it advantageous to add to the strength any reliable party. One of the Kroomen, or rather Africans, carried originally from Delagoa Bay, speaks a little Portuguese. The stoker, who is also a seaman, I have taken with a view to putting him in charge of the third boat. In my letter from the Cape, I forgot to mention that I succeeded in finding the two boys whom we liberated from slavery, and brought there in the *Pioneer*; they have willingly joined us, and are likely to be very useful as interpreters.

"On our arrival this morning at the East Luabo, we found the entrance completely changed and quite impassable; so we retraced our steps, and anchored off the Kongoni, where the bar seems fairly smooth. Here also the change is almost marvellous, Pearl Island having almost completely vanished, and the entrance become tortuous. We hoisted out the boat, which has taken much longer to put together than was anticipated (nearly three days); but finding her leaking at some of the joints, we got her in again to remedy the evil, and expect to have it ready to cross the bar at high water to-morrow.

"I have not altered my views respecting the probable time of our return to the mouth of the Zambesi, and have written asking the senior officer at the Cape for a ship to meet us on the 1st December.

"In conclusion, I am happy to say that, as far as I can judge, we are supplied with everything we can need, are all in the enjoyment of perfect health, and look forward confidently to a successful accomplishment of our undertaking.

"I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

"E. D. YOUNG,

"In command of Livingstone Search Expedition."

"To Sir R. I. Murchison, Bart."

"H.M.S. *Petrel*,

Simon's Bay, 15th August, 1867.

"SIR,

"I HAVE the honour to report that, in pursuance of your orders, I left Simon's Bay on the night of the 16th July, with Mr. Young and party. I carried a strong fair wind till midnight on the 18th July, when I had to raise steam for an hour or two, to communicate with Algoa Bay.

"Receiving no news of importance, I immediately proceeded, keeping the same fair wind, which increased to a strong gale, till past Natal, on July 21st. From this time I experienced light winds and calms, and I had to steam the remaining 600 or 700 miles. I anchored off the Kongoni mouth of the Zambesi at midnight on the 25th July, having made the passage, including the stoppage at Algoa Bay, in 9 days and 3 hours.

"Next morning Mr. Young being unable to recognise the place, I steamed for some 20 miles to the eastward, seeking either the Luabo or Kongoni entrance. I finally returned to my first position, which was indeed just off the Kongoni mouth, though Mr. Young had failed to recognise it, from the alterations that had taken place—Pearl Island having been completely washed away. Great changes had also taken place in the other entrance; the East Luabo appearing quite impracticable. On the passage up, on Mr. Young's requisition, I furnished him with our whale-boat, in addition to the one from the dockyard, and a few other miscellaneous stores. I also allowed my two

Kroomen (who it appears are natives of this part of the coast), and on his written requisition a stoker, named Arthur Stacey, to accompany him as volunteers, checking them on the ship's books as lent to the Expedition. On anchoring the second time off the Kongoni mouth, the steel boat which we had been employed in putting together during the previous three days, was hoisted out, but was found to leak so considerably that we had her lifted in again immediately to remedy the defect. The tide did not serve for crossing the bar till the next forenoon, by which time we had reconnoitred the entrance, and had all the boats, including the two cutters, loaded and ready to go in over the bar, in charge of Mr. Berners, the senior lieutenant. They all passed safely in, being directed by myself at the masthead with pre-arranged signals. In the afternoon Mr. Berners returned with the two cutters and the extra crews who had taken the boats in, and reported that Mr. Young having, with unexpected good fortune, met some natives at the point, who agreed to man his boats, required no further assistance from us. On the same evening, 27th July, I started on my return, using a very little steam to gain an offing—wind, swell, and current all setting on shore.

"Commander GORDON."

"To Commodore Henry Caldwell, C.B."

The following paper was read :—

On the Early Portuguese Expeditions to Abyssinia. By CLEMENTS R. MARKHAM, Esq., Secretary R.G.S.

THE author stated that as soon as the aspirations of Prince Henry of Portugal had been fulfilled by the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, by Bartholomew Dias, in 1487, King John II. saw the importance of collecting information in the East, with reference to the possibility of turning the rich trade of the Indies into the new channel ; and he was also anxious to discover the dominions of the Christian ruler called Prester John, who had been reported by Marco Polo to reign in the far east. Two Portuguese, named Alfonso de Payva, and Pedro de Covilham, were selected for this service. After a long journey through the East, Payva died at Cairo ; but Covilham, having heard that a Christian ruler reigned in the mountains of Ethiopia, and having gained no tidings of any other Christian king during all his wanderings, naturally concluded that the Ethiopian potentate was he for whom he had so long sought in vain. So, in pursuance of his instructions, and undeterred by the dangers of the journey, he penetrated into Abyssinia, and presented himself at the court of the Negus, which was then in the Southern Province of Shoa, in the year 1490. He delivered the King of Portugal's letter to Prester John to the Negus Alexander ; but he was detained by this prince and his successors, and was never allowed to leave the country. Covilham, as a young man, had distinguished himself both in the war with Spain and in Morocco, and was an officer of capacity and great courage. He married in Abyssinia, obtained great influence at Court, and sur-